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CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY AID OFFERS TO SOMALIA

For the past several months we have received unconfirmed reports of various Chinese military aid offers. These reports, however, were not from established reliable sources. This spring, for example, Peiping was said to have suggested training a Somali army of some 30,000 men. For this purpose they reportedly would need from 3-5,000 military technicians to train the Somalis in the use of Chicom military equipment. This proposal included plans for an immediate shipment of small arms and light explosives. But the offer was dependent on Prime Minister Abdirasid visiting Peiping to work out details. In June, prior to the Prime Minister's China trip, there were indications that military hardware, in any event, would be limited to small weapons primarily for guerilla warfare purposes.

While we suspect that military aid was a point of discussion during Abdirasid's autumn visit we have no details. As late as a week ago our Ambassador did not believe any firm commitments were made on either side. While a modest arms shipment cannot be precluded Chicom interests in Kenya, for example, would appear to limit severely the size of any military aid. However, a visit of technicians appears likely.

20 September 1963

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*2 copies to
23 Sept 63*

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